

From: OSG Agriculture Director
To: [LRO](#)
Subject: Oppose SB 181A
Date: Thursday, June 01, 2017 10:51:38 AM

Re: Opposition to SB 181A Relating to exemption from taxation for property of certain charitable institutions

Dear Chair Representative Barnhart and Committee Members,

This bill would require each community/subordinate Grange to annually file an information return with their local county tax assessor by April 1, at the start of the tax year or risk significant financial and legal penalties.

Granges have long standing as non-profit tax exempt 501©(8) fraternal beneficiary societies. This year of 2017 is the 150th anniversary of Grange. Currently, a tax exemption letter for each Grange in Oregon is on file with the appropriate county assessors, but this only had to be done one time.

This new bill would require a letter from each Grange every year. Granges are volunteer organizations that do not employ professional office staffs. Granges elect new officers either annually or every two years so there can be significant turnover of officers. Most Granges have extremely low incomes and do not pay for a PO Box, so changes in officers can also mean changes in mailing addresses. The potential is great for a Grange to innocently forget this filing and potentially suffer a crippling and most likely terminal financial burden.

Grange meeting halls that are owned and maintained by almost 170 local Granges around the state of Oregon are a significant benefit to their local communities and neighborhoods. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H groups, musicians, sewing and quilting clubs, Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers, Hunters Safety, Zumba, neighborhood watch groups, car clubs and other special interest clubs, watershed councils and theater groups are just a few of the entities that benefit from the availability of their local Grange hall as a meeting space. SB 181 would threaten this amazing community resource for minimal financial benefit to the state.

The Oregon State Grange strongly opposes SB 181A.

Thanks you for this opportunity to provide supporting testimony for SB 181A,

Jay Sexton
Agriculture Committee Director
Oregon State Grange